

Greenville County Flood Facts

Local Flood Hazard: Flooding in our County occurs in several areas: Brushy Creek, Rocky Creek and its tributaries, Gilder Creek and Welcome Creek, The Reedy, the Saluda and the Enoree Rivers. This results in water leaving their banks during or soon after heavy storms. Floodwaters may be as deep as two to three feet or higher. Streets and yards may be covered with water. Basements, lower floors, garages, and cars may flood. Flooding in all areas can come with little to no warning. If you live in one of these affected areas, you should be particularly alert for rising water during storm watches or warnings.



IF YOUR PROPERTY IS LOCATED IN OR IS ADJACENT TO
THE 1% ANNUAL FLOODPLAIN
Light Blue and Green are known flood hazard areas
Maroon is drainage areas with unknown flood hazards

County Flood Services: The first thing you should do is to check your proximity to a flood hazard. Flood maps and flood protection references are available at the Greenville County Public Library, in the Carolina Room. You may also visit the Codes Enforcement Division at County Square to determine if you are in a regulated flood hazard area. If you are in a regulated area, base flood elevations may be available. These services are free. If you are in a special flood hazard area or had a flood or drainage problems, you may want to check out these sources of assistance.

Flood Insurance: If you don't have flood insurance, talk to your insurance agent. Homeowner's insurance policies do not cover damage from floods. However, because Greenville County participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, you can purchase a separate flood insurance policy. This insurance is backed by the Federal government and is available to everyone, even for properties that have been flooded.

Some people have purchased flood insurance because their lender required it when they got a mortgage or home improvement loan. Usually these policies cover the building's structure only and not the contents. Of the total damages incurred since 1984, over one-third has been due to damage to furniture and contents. In 2006, approximately 622 Greenville County homeowners had flood insurance policies. If you are covered, you may want to check the amount and make sure you have contents coverage. Remember: Even if the last flood missed you or you have done some flood proofing, the next flood could be worse. Flood insurance typically covers all surface floods.

Flood Warning: The National Weather Service along with the Greenville County Emergency Management Agency, provide flood warning and evacuation data to local radio (WFBC, WROQ, WTPT) and television (WHNS, WSPA, WLOS, WYFF) stations. Greenville County Sheriff's Office and area Fire Departments will provide door-to-door warnings to those areas threatened by flooding, when evacuations are ordered in areas expected to flood. Residents should be prepared to move to a place of safety. The County of Greenville in conjunction with the Greenville County Emergency Management Agency will announce emergency shelter locations.

Property Protection Measures: Every year, flooding in the United States causes more property damage than any other type of natural disaster. While recent improvements in construction practices and regulations have made new homes less prone to flood damage, there is a significant number of existing homes susceptible to flood losses. The flooding to these properties can be minimized through temporary and permanent retrofitting techniques.

- One approach is to waterproof your walls and place watertight closures over the doorways. This method should be used on homes with basements or if the water will not get over two feet deep.
- Another approach is to raise your house above the flood level.

Measures to protect a property from flood damage include retrofitting, grading a yard, correcting local drainage problems, and emergency measures such as moving furniture and sandbagging.

Flood Safety: Do not walk through flowing water. Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths, mostly during flash floods. Currents can be deceptive; six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet. If you must walk in standing water, use a stick or pole to ensure that the ground is still there.

Do not drive through a flooded area. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Don't drive around road barriers; the road or bridge may be washed out.

Stay away from power lines and electrical wires. The number two flood killer, after drowning, is electrocution. Electrical current can travel through water. Please report downed power lines to the local power company. Have your electricity turned off by your power company. Some appliances, such as television sets, keep electrical charges even after they have been unplugged. Don't use appliances or motors that have gotten wet unless they have been taken apart, cleaned, and dried.

Be alert for gas leaks. Use a flashlight to inspect for damage. Don't smoke or use candles, lanterns, or open flames, unless you know the gas has been turned off and the area has been ventilated.

Drainage System Maintenance: Greenville County has a drainage system inspection and maintenance program. The Public Works Department conducts inspections on all right-of-way ditches at least once a year. The drainage system in Greenville County should be kept clean or flooding may occur. Debris, even grass clippings, in ditches may obstruct the flow of water and cause overflow into the streets, yards and homes. Greenville County Code Section 9-124 makes it illegal to take any action that will impede the flow of water in rights-of-way or dumping of debris into any right-of-way. If you see any violations please contact a litter officer at 422-2049.

South Carolina Code Annotated, (49-1-30) requires property owners to keep creeks and streams located on their property, clean of debris and free flowing. Greenville County Flood Control Ordinance makes it illegal to take any action that will impede the flow in regulated flood hazard areas. If you see any violations please contact the Greenville County Codes Department at 467-7060.

Permit Requirements: *All development* in the regulated flood hazards areas requires a permit (not just the construction of a building). You must contact the County Codes Department before you start any development. If you see any development in the floodplain without a permit you may contact the County Codes Department at 467-7060.

Greenville County requires that if the cost of reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvements to a building equals or exceeds 50% of the building's fair market value, then the building must meet the same construction requirements as a new building. Substantially damaged buildings must also be brought up to the same standards (e.g., a residence damaged so that the cost of repairs equals or exceeds 50% of the building's fair value before it was damaged) must be repaired to conform with the current requirements.

Natural and Beneficial Functions: Greenville County is a beautiful place to live, and the areas within or near our special flood hazard areas are important assets. The undisturbed wetlands provide a wide range of benefits in the human and natural systems. Water quality is improved through the wetlands ability to filter nutrients and impurities from runoff and process organic wastes. These areas provide breeding and feeding ground for fish and wildlife, create and enhance waterfowl habitat, support a high rate of plant growth and maintain biodiversity and the integrity of the ecosystem. Floodplains provide green space for protection of streams from development and the forces of erosion.

Repetitive Loss: A structure covered by a contract of flood insurance issued under the NFIP, that has suffered flood damage on two occasions during a 10-year period that ends on the date of the second loss, in which the cost to repair the flood damage, on average, equaled or exceeded 25% of the market value of the structure at the time of each flood loss.

County Council has put into place two mitigation programs to assist homeowners elevate their dwellings in an attempt to alleviate repeated flooding. One program is through the federal government Flood Mitigation Assistance program, where the Federal and County government will contribute up to 75% of the cost of the project. The other program is a grant from the County of Greenville that will pay up to \$7,500 towards the elevation of an owner- occupied dwelling. For more information please contact the Codes Enforcement office.